

The drawings and specification have been amended as required by the Examiner at cipher 1 of the Office Action. The claims have been amended to overcome the Examiner's objections thereto at ciphers 3-6 of the Office Action, and to better distinguish the claimed invention over the cited prior art. Additionally, new claims 17-43 have been added to the subject application to further scope the claimed invention. No new matter is believed to have been added to the subject application as a result of the changes made thereto.

The Examiner's objections to the Information Disclosure Statements filed on May 10, 1999 and June 16, 1999 are noted. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner provide clarification as to the precise manner in which the Examiner asserts that these Information Disclosure Statements are deficient.

In the Official Action, the Examiner has rejected combination of claims 1-4 and 11-12 under 35 U.S.C. Section 103 as being unpatentable over combinations of Schnell (U.S. Patent No. 5,923,654), Ayanoglu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,058,422), and Varghese et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,905,723). Applicant respectfully submits that these claims, as amended, are patentably distinguished over this prior art.

Schnell discloses a network switch for transferring packets of information. The switch includes a hash memory for storing a table of network port numbers corresponding to hash addresses of the network ports. Each of the network ports includes hash logic for converting a media access control (MAC) address from each data packet into a hash address. Each network port provides the hash address to the hash memory for receiving a

corresponding network port number. (See, e.g., Schnell, col. 3, line 65 to col. 4, line 10 and col. 8, line 45 to col. 10, line 27).

Ayanoglu is cited by the Examiner as disclosing “an uplink connection between a communication network and a router.” (Office Action, page 5). Varghese et al. discloses a network interconnection device having a router connected by a plurality of links to at least one multiport switch. Significantly, as is acknowledged by the Examiner, Varghese et al. does not disclose use of a hashing function to distribute packet flows among route processing engines. (See, e.g., Office Action, page 6).

Even assuming, for the sake of argument, Ayanoglu et al. does, in fact, disclose the features cited by the Examiner, no combination of the aforesaid prior art can be said to disclose or suggest the specific combination of features required in the routing system of Applicant’s claim 1, as amended, namely “a mechanism that performs a hashing function on at least a portion of network layer information in the packets to determine a distribution of the packets to the route processing engines for processing by the engines, the distribution being such that an original packet flow comprising the packets is preserved.” (Independent claim 1, as amended). Independent claim 11, as amended, contains limitations that are substantially similar to these limitations of independent claim 1, as amended. (See, claim 11, as amended). These features of Applicant’s independent claims 1 and 11, as amended, are nowhere disclosed or suggested in the prior art relied upon by the Examiner, and permit the inventions of these claims to achieve advantages that cannot be achieved by said prior art. (See, e.g., Specification, page 5, lines 16-20 and page 12, line 4 to page 14, line 3).

Thus, since this specific advantageous combination of features of Applicant's independent claims 1 and 11, as amended, is nowhere disclosed or suggested in the aforesaid prior art, it is respectfully submitted that no combination of said prior art renders obvious the inventions of Applicant's independent claims 1 and 11, as amended. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's rejections of combinations of claims 1-4 and 11-12, as amended, under 35 U.S.C. Section 103 as being unpatentable over combinations of Schnell, Ayanoglu et al., and Varghese have been overcome.

Quite apart from the foregoing, Applicant is submitting herewith an Information Disclosure Statement to bring to the attention of the Patent Office a recently issued patent (i.e., Wilford et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,111,877), which patent is owned by the assignee of the subject application. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner consider and make of record said patent in the examination of the subject application.

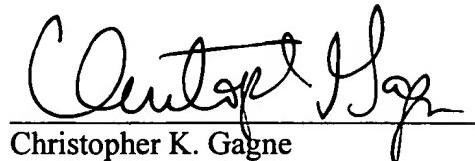
In the event that the Examiner deems personal contact desirable in disposition of this case, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (617) 951-3050.

A check in the amount of \$574 accompanies this Amendment to cover the cost of the claims that are being added to the subject application.

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Please charge any additional fee occasioned by this paper to our Deposit Account
No. 03-1237.

Respectfully submitted,



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